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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2003

THIS REPORT WILL PRESENT A TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
THEMES:

HEADLINES
BRIEFING
EDITORIAL OPINION

HEADLINES

MASS APPEAL

Bush angered: We've told Turks to stay away from Northern
Iraq - Hurriyet
Full speed to Baghdad - Hurriyet 3/23
Tears, death: Nothing new at the front - Milliyet 3/23
Poor Baghdad - Milliyet 3/22
U.S. furious about footage of captured soldiers - Sabah
Turkey isolated; AKP home alone - Sabah
'Iraq Governor' Gen. Franks: Tough days ahead - Sabah 3/23
Protests growing worldwide - Sabah 3/22
U.S. startled by Iraqi resistance - Turkiye
Ramadan: Real war in Baghdad - Turkiye
Saddam sets up wall of fire around Baghdad - Aksam 3/23
Night of horror - Aksam 3/22

OPINION MAKERS

Iraq halts U.S. advance on ground - Radikal
Turkey alone on Northern Iraq - Radikal 3/23
Shock and horror: Unprecedented air assault on Baghdad,
Mosul - Radikal 3/22
Civilians are being killed - Cumhuriyet 3/23
Millions of war protesters rally worldwide - Cumhuriyet 3/23
Massacre-like bombing on Baghdad - Cumhuriyet 3/22
Desert shock for U.S. - Yeni Safak
U.S. troops leaving Turkey - Zaman
Defense of Baghdad will be stronger - Zaman
Iraq in flames - Zaman 3/22

BRIEFING

Iraq: All dailies carry a warning by President Bush urging
Turkey to stay away from Northern Iraq. 'Turkey is aware
that the U.S. is working with the Kurds in the region, and
we see no reason for the Turks to intervene in Northern
Iraq,' Bush said. EU's Belgian Foreign Minister Louis
Michel stressed that if Turkey launched a military action in
the region, it would not be admitted to the EU. Germany
threatened to withdraw its AWACS and Patriot systems from
Turkey in the event of a cross-border operation into Iraq.
Papers echo strong criticism by the Iraqi Vice President,
Yasin Ramadan, who slammed the 'Islamist AKP government,'
saying that the 'Turkish people are not traitors, but the
party in power is a product of the U.S.' Mainstream papers
criticize the 'failure' of AKP policies which drew fire from
all sides. Papers are concerned that the Northern Iraq
issue has become a source of tension between Turkey and the
U.S. Addressing the nation on Sunday, Prime Minister
Erdogan said that Turkey would set up a buffer zone inside
Northern Iraq to halt possible terrorist infiltration and to
control refugee flow. U.S. hopes for a quick victory in
Iraq have been shattered after growing losses suffered by
U.S. and UK troops and the broadcast of video footage of
captured U.S. soldiers. Reports comment that the U.S. was
shocked by the fierce Iraqi resistance, and that seizing
Baghdad would be tougher than previously thought. Weekend
papers say that Turkey's opening its air corridor to U.S.
was an effort to ease tension with the U.S. Sunday's papers
report TGS Chief General Ozkok's denial of Saturday's press
stories concerning an alleged Turkish troop incursion into
Northern Iraq. Papers claim that the U.S. has laid down
three conditions for a Turkish military presence in the

region: Turkey should wait before dispatching troops; heavy weaponry should not be deployed; troops should not advance further than 15 km inside Northern Iraq. Saturday's papers say that the U.S. has urged Ankara to expel Iraqi diplomats for alleged involvement in espionage activities. The MFA has asked the U.S. for further evidence, reports note. U.S. troops are leaving their logistical and operations centers in southeast Turkey, taking back military equipment through the port of Iskenderun, all papers report on Monday.

EDITORIAL OPINION: War in Iraq

"The 5th Day"

Social democrat-intellectual Cumhuriyet carried this front page editorial comment (3/24): "Whether the war in Iraq takes longer than expected as President Bush has suggested, or shorter, the result will be the same: nothing will be easy in the future. The people of Iraq have not welcomed the foreign troops as saviors, contrary to what Bush and his aides had hoped and expected. In this context, Turkey's position stands on basic principle and is the right one. Turkey cannot be part of an unjust war, and cannot subvert international law and legitimacy for the sake of our strategic ally. . The bilateral atmosphere between Ankara and Washington is cool at the moment. Yet the fact of the matter is that the Bush administration is in need of Turkey's cooperation if it aims to establish US sovereignty over the oil region in the Muslim world."

"A mistake which can last for the next two generations"

Fatih Altayli criticized Turkey's handling of the Iraq issue in mass appeal Hurriyet (3/24): "From the very beginning, the AKP government constantly gave the wrong signals. Moreover, advisers or bureaucrats 'close to the AKP' misled Washington even more. In the end, Turkey took the necessary steps, but it was too late for them to do any good. There are clear messages coming from the US now. Even well-known pro-Turkish Congressmen are keeping their distance from Turkey. Handling some critical issues in the near future, such as the Armenian genocide resolution, might not be as easy as it used to be. Turkey is hurting itself by not giving a clear 'yes' or 'no' answer to the US. There is a big price to pay -- not only for us, but for the next generation as well."

"The current situation"

Hasan Unal commented in the Islamic-intellectual Zaman (3/24): "It would be different had Turkey stood against the war clearly from the very beginning. This, of course, would have required no negotiation and no bargaining with the US. . Now we look like an undesired, abandoned baby who nobody wants to care for. Turkey seriously damaged its very important relationship with the US. At the same time, Turkey failed to prevent the war from happening. Moreover, Turkey's rights and interests -- not only in Iraq, but in the entire region -- are now at stake. Such incredible strategic planning and diplomatic achievement (!) deserves to be a future case study in universities."

PEARSON